6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River

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These laws are followed to the present day amongst all the Indians on the Yukon, Pelly, Teslin Lake, and Upper Liard, but the Mountain Indians do not.

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Exogamous moieties regulated marriage. Members of one division also prepared the opposite group's dead for burial. The sides tendered potlatches to one another. On such occasions the members of each group adorned their faces with a particular colored paint, blue for the Crows and red for the Wolves. The designs, however, did not differ. When a large number of people camped together each moiety "rustled" wood for the fire, stacking poles in a single heap. Then they would slide the fuel into the fire, each side in succession adding one piece after the other. Afterwards the brothers-in-law (i.e., the men belonging to opposite moieties) sat around and talked. The practice of fire tending may be regarded as a simple rite of intensification,[14] serving to promote interaction between the segments and thus to contribute to the solidarity of the larger aggregate.

565 567 [177]

Three social levels were distinguished in the pre-contact Kaska community, the rich, poor, and slaves. Social stratification on the basis of wealth is a prominent feature in the culture of the Pacific Drainage Athapaskans and is even more extensively developed among the Indians of the Northwest Coast. One informant (O) knew about an hereditary nobility among the Tlingit but stated flatly that the system of social stratification found there had no counterpart in the Cassiar. Such a statement is not unexpected in terms of the association to be anticipated between class structure and surplus-wealth production.

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A rich man, tenatiia (the same word today is used to designate the Supreme Being), stood out among his fellows because he could support four or five wives, wore finer clothes, enjoyed more possessions, and employed occasional servants. His word received ready attention. "People always listened to a rich man." Wealth derived from skillful hunting and trapping. The poor man, tenaɣteɣxɛʔitʔa, lived with a single wife and often found it difficult to provide even for her and their children. Poorer clothes distinguished the poor man and in group affairs his word carried little weight. Ideally, cordial relations existed between the rich and poor. If a rich man spoke harshly to his less fortunate peer the former's supernatural power might desert him and all his ability to kill game would be reduced. Under such circumstances helping a poor man would assist him to recoup his luck. Poor men who received assistance from wealthier people repaid such help by working for their patrons, for example, visiting the latters' deadfalls. In this way the rich came to enjoy the labor of servants. A slave, xiina (this is said to be a Tlingit word adopted into the Liard River vocabulary), represented a war captive. Inasmuch as the Kaska generally killed enemy male captives, slaves were usually women. A man sometimes referred in fun to his sister's children as slaves.[15]

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Dease River Kaska. As late as 1928 Father Allard, an Oblate missionary stationed at McDame Creek, wrote, "All members of the tribe are free to hunt and fish over all the tribal territory. They hunt and fish in little bands of one, two or three families,—each family consisting of father, mother and children, with sometimes other members,

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[14] Chapple and Coon, *Principles of Anthropology* (1942), 485-486.
[15] See above, p. 77.